

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY YOUTH COMMISSION

“OUR VOICES MATTER”

PHOTOS FROM THE
INSTALLATION CEREMONY
ON DECEMBER 19, 2011



INAUGURAL EDITION



The Miami-Dade County Youth Commission was created by County Ordinance in 2011 as part of the vision of Commissioner Barbara J. Jordan, District 1. Its purpose is to provide young people with a vehicle to participate in the process of county government. Motivated students from each Commission district represent and articulate the needs of youth in Miami-Dade and advise the Mayor and Board of County Commissioners on matters affecting the youth population.

Through the collaborative efforts of Miami-Dade governmental officials and departments, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and other community supporters, the Youth Commission is a positive model for young people. Officials hear firsthand what concerned teens have to say, have the opportunity to educate them about the governmental process, and create a symbolic relationship between youth and County.

This special edition newsletter marks the beginning of a movement to extend the reach of the Youth Commission's hand into the community because "Our Voices Matter".

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RECENT EVENTS

PHOTOS FROM THE WEBPAGE INAUGURATION ON FEBRUARY 16, 2012



MDCYC members on the day of inauguration of the MDCYC website.



The use of innovative technology to expand on the methods of communication.



CDPY member receiving an award for assistance on the MDCYC website.

Miami-Dade County Youth Commission WEBSITE LAUNCHED!

*The Miami-Dade County Youth Commission
has finally gone global!*

In the last couple of weeks the Miami-Dade County Youth Commission has officially been able to access a larger community of youth in their newly created website: MDCYC.org. This project, initiated and run by District 6's Youth Commissioner, Cesar Castillo, features information about the MDCYC, its commissioners, upcoming events, and special announcements. What inspired this development? "When I was asked to become a member of the Miami-Dade County Youth Commission, I naturally went to Google the group and nothing came up," stated Youth Commissioner Cesar Castillo. Driven and inspired, he has collaborated with Creative Design Project for Youth (CDPY) to develop this project and bring the MDCYC to the arena of mass communication. In an age where the Internet is at the touch of a finger and most youth regularly spend time "surfing" and accessing the web, the MDC Youth Commission continues to expand its abilities to access their youth and voice their concerns. In an age where global communication is a norm, the MDCYC website has already been accessed and received hits from various foreign nations. This institution can also be found on Facebook and Twitter. The Miami-Dade County Youth Commissioners are truly thinking globally, but acting locally.

VISIT MDCYC.ORG!

RECENT EVENTS

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY YOUTH COMMISSIONERS HELP THE HOMELESS

The Homeless Youth Project was a project that was approved by the Miami Dade Youth Commission at their April meeting after being proposed by District 9 Commissioner Anyssa Chebbi. In this project, several schools including Coral Reef Senior, Miami High, TERRA, and Miami Springs collected hygiene and school supply items for homeless students in Miami Dade. Commissioner Emily Freeman also collected items through company donations instead of through a school. The project this year collected more than 800 items for students in Miami Dade. These items were collected by the Homeless Student District of Miami Dade County Public Schools and are scheduled for distribution by them as well. Over 4,500 students had been identified as homeless in the 2010-2011 school year and this project was done in hopes of giving these students a chance to succeed in school despite their disadvantages. Next year, the Commission hopes that this project will expand to every commissioner's school, if not to every school in Miami Dade County. We would also like to recognize Commissioners Chebbi, Mesa, Castillo, Freeman, Salinas and Abreu for spearheading this project at their respective schools.



Youth Commissioner Emily Freeman with items that have been collected for the homeless.

YOUNG TALENT BIG DREAMS



Youth Commissioner Brenda Abreu Molnar (left) and Ambar Mesa (right) at the Young Talent Big Dreams Talent Show.

Immediately after their first meeting for the 2011-2012 term, the Youth Commissioners decided they wanted to host an event where youth within the county would be able to showcase their talents. Little did they know that this was already in action. Every year The Children's Trust devotes several months to seeking youth in Miami-Dade County that have exquisite talents. After inviting Ms. Emily Cardenas from The Children's Trust to tell us a little more about "Young Talent Big Dreams" and what it takes to put on a county-wide talent show we soon realized that because of issues with location and the time-frame, the Youth Commission wouldn't be able to put on a talent show this year.

Ms. Cardenas appreciated our concern and love for the youth that she invited the Youth Commission to co-MC the talent show and aid in hosting it. Two commissioners would be sent out to both the semi-finals and then the finals to help Mr. Earl Maulding host part of the show. Youth Commissioner Lina Rojas and Youth Commissioner Christopher Fisk we asked to attend and help host the Semi-Finals. For the Finals, both Commissioner Ambar Mesa and Commissioner Brenda Abreu Molnar were invited to attend and host as well as introduce the judges for the evening. All of the Youth Commissioners that had the opportunity to attend can testify to the fact that the experience was quite enlightening and they are proud to be a part of the talented youth that come from Miami-Dade County.

"OUR VOICES MATTER."

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2012!

To the graduating seniors of Miami-Dade County,

Congratulations upon graduating high school. After years of schooling and learning about the world, you have all finally reached a moment in which you will set out to explore it. Remember to never give up and keep striving for your goals.

To the graduating seniors of the MDCYC,

You will be greatly missed. Your relentless efforts and persistent leadership in the Youth Commission will forever hold your mark. It has been an honor to host a group of such talented, hard-working, and driven individuals. Continue to lead in society and assist those around you.

Good luck in all future endeavors.

-The Miami-Dade County Youth Commission

"The Youth Commission has opened my eyes to the inner-workings of the most local level of government. Along the way, I learned that it is not easy to accomplish anything since there is accountability at every level of the system. However, it has also given me the opportunity to proudly represent the youth of my school, and of District 12, identifying areas of concern while also areas of pride in my community."

-Graduating Senior Alejandro Moreno

GRADUATING SENIORS ON THE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY YOUTH COMMISSION



Graduating Seniors from left to right:
Alejandro Moreno, Annette Valero, and
Peter Ramon

- Clarence Moore, III
District 3 – Young Men's Preparatory Academy
- Daniela Salinas
District 5 – Miami Senior High School
- Raveena Patel
District 6 – iPreparatory Academy
- Gabriella Diez
District 10 – Archbishop Coleman Carroll Senior High School
- Alexa Verite
District 11 – Archbishop Coleman Carroll Senior High School
- Alejandro Moreno
District 12 – Ronald W. Reagan/Doral Senior High School
- Peter Ramon
District 12 – Belen Jesuit Preparatory Sc
- Michael Berrios
District 13 – Westland Hialeah Senior High School
- Annette Valero
MDCPS Board of Education – Miami Senior High School

"I couldn't have asked for anything better as a high school experience than to be part of the MDCYC. I've not only met great leaders, my fellow commissioners, but I have had the opportunity to participate in my community in a grand way and make a small difference that with the help of current and future commissioners will become a huge one."

-Graduating Senior Daniela Salinas

"I learned a lot from my experience in the Youth Commission. I went in not really knowing anything about parliamentary procedures or local government, but I'm leaving with new knowledge that will help me work in large groups (such as Robert's Rules) and how I can be an active citizen in my own community."

-Graduating Senior Peter Ramon

COMMISSIONER BARBARA J. JORDAN YOUTH COMMISSIONERS MARICA DANIELS AND LEON FUSSELL



Youth Commissioner Marica Daniels (left) and Commissioner Barbara Jordan (center) at the 2010 Installation Ceremony

DISTRICT ONE AND THE HISTORY OF THE YOUTH COMMISSION

The Miami-Dade County Youth Commission was created by County Ordinance in 2011 as part of the vision of Commissioner Barbara J. Jordan, District 1.

Youth Commissioner Annette Valero (left) and Commissioner Barbara Jordan (right) at the 2011 Installation Ceremony

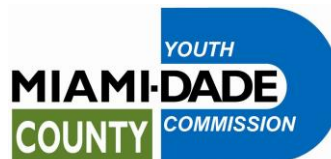


ABOUT MARICA DANIELS

Marica Daniels attends Miami Carol City Senior High School, in District 1. She represents Commissioner Barbara Jordan and is now serving her second term on the Youth Commission. Marica's obligations mostly pertain to school, her job, the youth commission, and extracurricular activities.

As a student, she excels in school and has an elevated interest in the field of science and math. Marica is number one in her junior class and number two in her school. Miss. Daniels has received medals and certificates for being on the principal and superior honor roll. In preparation for college, she takes part in Dual Enrollment and Advanced Placement courses. She indulges in activities and clubs, such as, the University of Florida Alliance, the African School Alliance, and the "I AM ONE" Youth Mentoring Program. Additionally, Marica has participated in the Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Oratorical Contest and the Florida East Coast Baptist Association's Oratorical Competition, both of which she has placed first place in. She also completed a summer internship at the University of Miami with the Miami Model's STIR (Students Training in Research) Program.

Marica's most adored interest involves the art of dance. She is a 3rd-year member of Images Modeling and Performing Arts Troupe and a 1st-year member of the Mirage Dance Academy. During her freshman and sophomore year in high school, Marica was a Miami Carol City Diamond Dancer for her schools marching band. She plans on continuing her love for dance in the ensuing years of high school and college and possibly beyond that. Like most teenagers, Marica enjoys spending time with family, hanging out with friends, going to the movies, and listening to music, of course when she isn't on a dance floor.



"OUR VOICES MATTER."

DISTRICT 2

COMMISSIONER JEAN MONESTIME YOUTH COMMISSIONER JUDE BRUNO



Commissioner Jean Monestime and Youth Commissioner Jude Bruno at the December 2012 Installation Ceremony.

CHAIRPERSON OF THE MDCYC

As the Miami-Dade County Youth Commission Chairperson, Jude Bruno leads the group and is responsible for maneuvering the MDCYC meetings. It is the responsibility of the Chair to convene regularly scheduled Youth Commission meetings, to see that all orders and resolutions of the Committee are carried into effect, to delegate any specific powers, to sign all official business, to ensure that Roberts Rules of Parliamentary Orders are followed, and to serve as the guide for the other Youth Commissioners to follow. In the Youth Commission's inaugural year, Natalie Roberts held this position. She now attends The College of William and Mary.

LETTER FROM JUDE BRUNO

Hello District 2 Youth,

My name is Jude Bruno and as of December 19th, 2011, I now represent you all as your Youth Commissioner. It has been a pleasure serving this year and I hope to be able to serve next school year. I have many ideas and projects I would like to start with the schools in regards to bullying and civic engagement.

Like many leaders, we all have a life plan and my long-term goal is first and foremost to get a great educational experience. I plan on finishing my secondary schooling and maybe going to Georgetown University in Washington D.C, Harvard Law, or a school in the State of Florida. However, wherever I go, I shall work on getting a degree in Homeland Security/Criminal Justice, B.A in Psychology and/or Education,. I haven't fully decided as to what I will be majoring in, but I know it will be a track that can better me as a person and help my community in return. One thing that I do know for sure is that I shall work on my law degree at FIU to practice law and then help those who cannot help themselves by running to be Florida's 49th Governor!

My goal before graduating from Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial High School is to be the Student Adviser to the Miami-Dade County School Board, and I happy to say that I have completed that task for the 2012-2013 school year. I also have a big dream of being the 50th President of the United States, and bring the focus of Washington on the forgotten. I hope you all have a great summer and see you real soon!

-Jude Bruno

“OUR VOICES MATTER.”

DISTRICT 3

COMMISSIONER AUBREY EDMONSON

YOUTH COMMISSIONERS CLARENCE MOORE III AND JENNISE SMALLS



Youth Commissioner Clarence Moore III (left) and Commissioner Sally A. Heyman (center) at the 2010 Installation Ceremony

PARLIAMENTARIAN OF THE MDCYC

As the Miami-Dade County Youth Commission Parliamentarian for the 2010-2011 year, Clarence Moore III was responsible for advising the Youth Commission on the proper parliamentary process during all meetings, maintaining proper decorum of the members present during all meetings and events, calling upon to make decisions concerning conflicting interpretations of the rules governing the Youth Commission's meetings, calling role call at the beginning of each meetings, and much more.

DISTRICT 4

COMMISSIONER SALLY A. HEYMAN

YOUTH COMMISSIONERS LINA ROJAS AND JACOB STERN

ABOUT LINA ROJAS

The Paragon of Persistence, full of hunger to improve the world as well as herself, Commissioner Lina Rojas finds inspiration in the fact that there are no limits to where she can go. She therefore had no trouble reaching over a thousand hours in community service, tackling Vice Presidency in Alonzo and Tracy Mourning Senior High's Student Government Association and Law Academy, and being Co-Captain of her school's Cheerleading Squad. Commissioner Lina Rojas is also very involved in the community especially at her church New Beginnings Praise and Worship Center where she is a part of Signs of Worship, a ministry that ministers to people through American Sign Language. Commissioner Rojas' love for Children has driven her to also get involved in the ministry Seeds of Faith where she is a Sunday school teacher for the Nursery Children. In addition, Commissioner Rojas volunteered at the Sunny Isles Beach Summer Camp where she was an assistant in Tot-Lot, The camp for the three to four year olds.

Commissioner Rojas enjoys the idea of spreading joy in all she does, but particularly while wearing a cheerleading outfit, and, although inherently a chatty Kathy, she is always willing to listen. Commissioner Rojas aspires to be a lawyer and has interned at the Patino Law Firm for the past two years as well as interned in the North Dade Justice Center this past summer. Commissioner Lina Rojas hopes that through her role as a youth commissioner she will be able to work with other youth commissioners and members within the community in order to improve her community and truly make a difference.



Youth Commissioner Jacob Stern (center) at the December 2012 Installation Ceremony.



COMMISSIONER BRUNO A. BARREIRO YOUTH COMMISSIONERS DANIELA SALINAS AND ARIELLE DERIVAL

ABOUT DANIELA SALINAS



Daniela Salinas was born in Caracas, Venezuela and is legally blind. She has worked hard through out her schooling years, especially high school, to achieve excellence, and portray a role model for those students with a disability that may think or be thought to fail due to their limitation. However, she does not consider these limitations as such; things are simply done differently, but always with the same fervor, passion, and dedication. She has received numerous awards and achievements, such as the "Hero of the Year Award," the "Dartmouth College Book Award," Posse Foundation Finalist, "The Mary Joe Battle MacDonald Scholarship", "Physics Honors", "Literature", "Foreign Languages", and recognitions by the Miami-Dade County Board of Commissioners, Award of Excellence from the Miami-Dade County Public School's Superintendent, among others. She has maintained a 3.78 unweighted and 5.11 weighted GPA. Furthermore, she has held leadership positions while in high school. For example, in her Sophomore year, she was the community Peer Leader in the Miami-Dade County (MDC) "I Speak My Peace" Violence Prevention Program, and the MDC Youth Commission. Among her community service projects are the two MDC involvement mentioned above, walking to support guide/service dogs, volunteering at a shelter that rescues dogs from death row, organizing cans and boxes of food at the Feeding South Florida Foundation, volunteering at the South Florida Work Force event, tutoring 10th grade students to get ready for the FCAT, and mentoring a blind student.

As a Youth Commissioner she has tried to smooth the path for future youth commissioners to bring success and excellence for our youth, in order to help all of us to be heard, helped, and supported to have a better future.

ABOUT ARIELLE DERIVAL



Arielle Derival is an 11th grade student at Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial High School where she currently has a 3.78 GPA on a 4.0 scale. She is currently secretary on the Executive Board of the Miami Dade County Youth Commission, and Chairperson of the Advocacy and Legislation Committee. She represents District 5 with Commissioner Bruno Barreiro, where she participates and serves as a role model for her community. In the school setting, Arielle currently serves in the role of president of the Law & Order club and is secretary of the National Honor Society. Arielle aspires to be an attorney and to reach that goal; it is her dream to attend law school. She enjoys debating, participating in oratorical contests, participating in Mock Trial and Moot Court competitions, and serving as a volunteer for the Miami Dade County Teen Court. Arielle Derival is also involved in numerous societies and programs outside of the school setting such as, the National Honor Society, National Achievers Society, and Florida International University Upward Bound Pre-Collegiate Program.

Arielle is self-motivated and has a strong head on her shoulder. As of now, she is aspiring to take part in an internship with the Criminal Defense Attorney, Robyn Blake, for the summer, as she has already had the opportunity to intern with the State Attorney's Office. Arielle has been recognized for numerous awards such as the award for ACT Math & Science, Spanish Award for non-Spanish speakers, the American Legion award, Chemistry Award, FIU Mock Trial Competition Champion Team award and awards in various other areas. In addition to being a great leader, Arielle enjoys spending time with her family and friends, reading interesting material and researching new programs she can take part in. Arielle strives to be nothing but the best. She plans to bring bright, new, innovative and creative ideas to the Haitian community. She wants to insure that the Haitian community has as many resources as possible and network with individuals that can make that happen. With Arielle taking on all of these leadership roles, she has great potential to be someone successful in life.

"I've discovered that it may be hard to accomplish big things, but many of us together can have the world at our finger tips by just trying."

-Youth Commissioner Daniela Salinas

COMMISSIONER REBECA SOSA

YOUTH COMMISSIONERS CESAR CASTILLO AND RAVEENA PATEL



Youth Commissioner Cesar Castillo explaining the main components of the MDCYC website.



Youth Commissioner Cesar Castillo explaining the main components of the MDCYC website.

ABOUT CESAR CASTILLO

Cesar Castillo was born on December 6, 1995 in Miami, FL as the middle child to Cuban father Eduardo Castillo and Costa Rican mother Eylin Castillo.

From an early age Cesar was taught that through hard work and dedication, anything can be achieved. Cesar's first passion is playing the violin, and got his first violin at age eight beginning his lessons at his elementary school, South Hialeah Elementary and went on to be known throughout the area as a young talented violinist taking up lead roles in school Orchestras and later auditioning and being part of the South Florida Youth Symphony. Besides being active in art and music, Cesar is an active member in the community. In September 2010 Cesar Co-founded "The Stroke Awareness Team" a group of High school students giving awareness to the community on the topic of stroke which mostly effects the Hispanic and African American population that makes up the majority of our county citizens. Cesar has also teamed up with an organization called the MMRL, a world leader in Cardiac research in collaboration with his award winning stroke awareness team in order to save life through awareness. Cesar has also been elected Master Councilor of Oleeta West Dade chapter Demolay, an organization for young men dedicated to the leaders of tomorrow, Member and proud supporter of Missing Children Global Network Inc. a non-profit Organization dedicated to finding and rehabilitating Missing and exploited children, and works with many other organizations throughout his community.

Cesar proudly attends Miami Springs Senior High School in the city of Miami Springs and was initiated into the Youth Commission December 19, 2011 and is currently Chairman of the Miami Dade County Youth Health Sub-Committee and founder of mdcyc.org the official website of the Youth Commission in collaboration with the "Creative Design Project For Youth" (Led by art director Rene Barge) and is currently chairman of the Website Coordination Sub-Committee. Cesar is co-owner of "Castillo Limo Service" and recently started his own brand of men and women designs "DC alternative Designs" and aspires to study Business at Stanford University.

"OUR VOICES MATTER."

COMMISSIONER XAVIER L. SUAREZ YOUTH COMMISSIONERS EMILY FREEMAN AND ASHLEY SANCHEZ

ABOUT EMILY FREEMAN

Emily Jo Freeman serves as one of District 7's Miami-Dade County Youth Commissioners. Emily, who is 15 years old and in the 10th grade, has been homeschooled for the past 5 years; she is also currently attending Dual Enrollment at Miami-Dade College. As well as being a Youth Commissioner for Miami-Dade County, she has attained multiple other leadership roles. Emily has served as the 2011-2012 Miami-Dade 4-H County Council President and a Florida 4-H State Executive Board Member and will be serving as the 2012-2013 District XIII (made up of Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties) 4-H President and Miami-Dade 4-H County Council Vice President. Last year, she was awarded 2nd place in a state-wide public speaking competition, the Chris Allen Award for Outstanding Lobbyist at 4-H Legislature, and the Silver Service award for community service. Emily feels that serving in your community is very important and makes a big impact. Some of the ways she has served Miami-Dade County are: volunteering at a migrant facility, serving food at a homeless shelter, helping at local churches, teaching in 40+ public schools through 4-H about science, finance, nutrition, etc., and she has also been volunteering as an attorney at Miami-Dade Teen Court program on a regular basis for the past two years. Emily has also been a competitive gymnast for the past 5 years at Gym Kidz Coral Gables. Finally, she has been attending a homeschool enrichment program called P.A.C.E. for the past 5 years that has allowed her to increase her knowledge in various fine arts and performing arts subjects such as photography, ceramics, painting, dance, piano and vocal performance.

Emily is extremely excited to have this opportunity to serve as a Miami-Dade County Youth Commissioner. She is very thankful to be able to represent the youth of this county and hopes that she will be able to be a voice for them as well. She hopes that through this program she can help encourage other youth to become more involved in government, raise awareness about teen crime in Miami-Dade County and encourage youth to help their county more through service.



ABOUT ASHLEY SANCHEZ

Ashley Marie Sanchez was born May 13, 1996. She was raised into a very academically and athletically driven family. All her life she had been doing a sport whether it be cheerleading for Comets All-Stars or rowing for the Miami Rowing Club. She attends the MAST Academy in Key Biscayne as a Sophomore and has been enrolled into the Chiefs Honor Roll, which is equivalent to the Principles Honor Roll at different schools. Some of her other achievements are receiving "Perfect Attendance" Awards and a "Presidential" Award.

Ms. Sanchez's favorite things to do are row, read and serve her community in any way possible. Her plan for her district and the county as a whole is to eliminate bullying and abuse in schools entirely. This includes her installing programs such as "No Place for Hate" and others like it around the county.



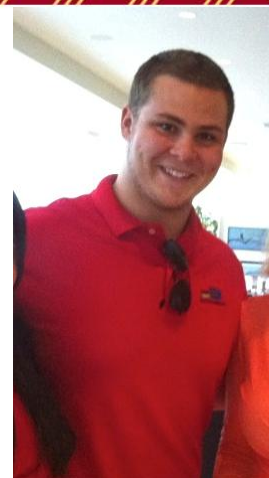
"OUR VOICES MATTER."

DISTRICT 8
COMMISSIONER LYNDIA BELL**YOUTH COMMISSIONERS GIANCARLO CASIANO AND CHRISTOPHER FISK KOLYCHKINE****ABOUT GIANCARLO CASIANO**

Giancarlo Casiano was born in Miami, Florida. He is a sophomore at Ferguson Senior High School. Giancarlo is active in sports and is a baseball player for the Ferguson Sr. baseball team. He also contributes his time coaching 7 and under and T-ball players in the community on how to play the game of baseball. Some of his accomplishments are that he gave young youth the experience they need to move forward in the sport of baseball. As a youth commissioner he hopes to learn lots of new things as well as have the chance to help youth in Miami-Dade.

**ABOUT CHRISTOPHER FISK KOLYCHKINE**

Christopher Fisk Kolychkine has been elected Class of 2013 President his freshman, sophomore, and junior years and was recently elected to be the Student Council (Body) president for his senior year. He's been an active member of the Miami-Dade District SGA and was just elected Vice-President of District SGA for the 2012-2013 year. He's been a "Thinker" at Think Factory for a few years now as well as a HOBY Youth Leadership Ambassador, Active Teen Alumni Member, and now appointed President of the Miami Chapter. Commissioner Fisk Kolychkine has served on the Village of Pinecrest Youth Advisory Council to lend a youthful voice to Mayor Lerner of Pinecrest and her Council. Recently he became a proud member of the CLEO Institute's Youth Task Force to become a dexterous Climate Change Communicator.

**"OUR VOICES MATTER."**

COMMISSIONER DENNIS MOSS YOUTH COMMISSIONERS AMBAR MESA AND ANYSSA CHEBBI

ABOUT AMBAR MESA

Ambar Mesa devotes most of her time to her academics, her community, and friends and family. She is a student in the IB academy at Coral Reef Senior High. Community service is something that is very important to her. Her love for community service and civic engagement has led her to accumulate over 700 hours of community service since her freshman year of high school. Her goal before she graduates is to surpass the 1000 mark. She was always taught from a young age that helping others should bring happiness to oneself, whether it's picking up someone's pencil when they drop it or going to a homeless shelter and sharing your time with someone in need. Furthermore, she is currently an active member in her school's Spanish Honor Society and DFY-it club. Both of these clubs exemplify beliefs close and dear to her. Being a Hispanic in the Spanish Honor Society has taught her the importance of spreading cultures and learning about all different kinds of languages. Living in such a multicultural city, we are witnesses of all different kinds of people coming from all kinds of backgrounds and this club has allowed her and other youths to celebrate a very predominant one, the Latin community. Also, one of her proudest achievements has been her dedication to the DFY-it club at her school. Ever since signing up freshman year she has always been happy to identify herself as an active advocate of a Drug Free Youth. This club helps prevent our society's youth from the use of drugs and alcohol. After personally seeing the affects of an alcoholic in her family, she believes this issue is one of the most important in our community today, and to be able to engage in activities that help prevent and advocate these issues are very dear to her heart.

Not only does she hope to continue aiding her community in whatever she can do, but she also has had the opportunity to meet other inspiring teens that share the same interest of service as she do through one of her most recent service project which was becoming a part of The Children's Trust Youth Advisory Committee where was recently chosen to be Corresponding Secretary for the 2012-2013 year as well as being honored with a Service Award. This year, this committee hopes to tackle the issue of literacy among young children. She believes that along with all these other motivated individuals we can truly make a difference in our adolescent community, indeed a very important part of our community! She was recently interviewed and selected to become a mentor at a student-funded and student-run non-profit, Leading Miami, where she will have the opportunity to provide workshop for middle-school students on leadership skills. This is truly all she asks for from this experience, a chance to make a difference in someone's life, even if it's just one. As a member of the Youth Commission she hopes that along with the other commissioners she will be able to make a difference in the lives of many teens.



ABOUT ANYSSA CHEBBI

Anyssa Chebbi is a rising junior in the International Baccalaureate program at Coral Reef Senior High School where she is President of the Class of 2014 for the second year in a row. Anyssa is also the Vice President of the Model United Nations club at Coral Reef. She has been involved in a tutoring program at Sunset Elementary School for the past two years where she tutors first and second graders in the French language. This past year, Anyssa raised over 600 dollars for the JDRF Walk for Diabetes, a cause dear to her after her diagnosis with the disease 4 years ago. As a Youth Commissioner for District 9, Anyssa began the Homeless Youth Project in which hygiene and school supplies for homeless students in Miami Dade County.



“OUR VOICES MATTER.”

COMMISSIONER JAVIER D. SOUTO
YOUTH COMMISSIONERS BRENDA ABREU MOLNAR AND GABRIELLA DIEZ

ABOUT BRENDA ABREU MOLNAR

Brenda Abreu Molnar has served as the Student Government President for two years in a row at TERRA Environmental Research Institute. She served as the Vice-President of the National Honor Society Chapter at her school and is the newly elected President of the National Honor Society. She has received numerous awards and acclamations, including the Leadership Award, Principal's Award, Outstanding Science Student Award, and Outstanding Math Student Award, while maintaining a 4.0 unweighted GPA. She plays libero for her Varsity Volleyball team and is an active member of Mu Alpha Theta. Her greatest honor is being elected as a Miami-Dade Youth Commissioner and she has served as the Youth Commission's Historian for two years.



ABOUT GABRIELLA DIEZ

Gabriella Diez represents District 10 as a student of Archbishop Carroll and, come this fall, she will be a freshman at New York University. As part of the Youth Commission, she was able to participate in several community service events, such as The Blacks' Annual Gala. Other memorable community service events that she has been a part of throughout high school include the Big Brothers Big Sisters Annual Christmas Party, the Susan G. Komen Walk for Breast Cancer, Walk Now for Autism Speaks, and Annual 5K Walk/Run for Asthma. She has also participated in the Best Buddies Foundation and volunteered as a summer camp counselor at Highpoint Academy. Overall, her experience with the Miami-Dade Youth Commission has been positive and she would recommend any high school student to participate in it for at least one year.



“OUR VOICES MATTER.”

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN JOE A. MARTINEZ
YOUTH COMMISSIONERS CYNTHIA LARROQUE AND ALEXA VERITE
OFFICE OF THE CHAIR STEPHANIE PARDINAS

ABOUT CYNTHIA LARROQUE

Cynthia Larroque was born on October 19, 1995 in Hialeah, Florida. She comes from an entirely Cuban family and she is very proud of her Hispanic background. Today, Cynthia Larroque attends the Cambridge Global Studies Academy at G. Holmes Braddock Senior High School where she has become a role model for most of her classmates and peers. Cynthia is always willing to go the extra mile to help her classmates when they do not understand a particular subject and has always demonstrated maximum effort when completing her assignments. Some of Cynthia's interests include law, performing arts, debate, and spending time with friends and family. After her years in high school are over she hopes to continue her academic success at Harvard University, which has been her dream ever since she was young. At Harvard University she plans to study corporate law and be the best at it.

When it comes to accomplishments Cynthia's list is never endless. In only her first year of being part of the Youth Against Domestic Violence organization she managed to work her way up to the secretary position. She has managed to raise awareness across all of Miami about the effects of domestic violence and has worked effortlessly with victims of domestic violence to help them recover. Cynthia has helped lead the Youth Against Domestic Violence season donations for the Child Net and Women in Distress shelters, which help provide a place for the victims to recover safely and efficiently. Cynthia has also been elected as class representative for all the Cambridge Global Studies Academy tenth graders. She has received numerous awards for excelling in every academic subject. Cynthia has also won seven first place trophies as a dancer for an all-star dance team. One of the most impressive accomplishments that Cynthia has is that she receives an award every summer from the Mayor of Miami for maintaining a perfect attendance since kindergarten. Lastly, Cynthia has managed to establish herself as the top student in her class by maintaining an average grade of an 'A' in every single one of her classes, and most importantly, has become a successful Youth Commissioner.



ABOUT STEPHANIE PARDINAS-LIUZZI

Commissioner Stephanie Paradinas is humbled to have been elected to become an officer of four honor societies at her school G. Holmes Braddock. These positions include becoming the treasurer of her Spanish National Honor Society, Math National Honor Society, and Science National Honor Society, as well as the Secretary of SECME. Also, she has received an Award for AICE Spanish for having the highest grade in the class and an award for being the Cambridge Liaison, which is a student chosen to represent the Cambridge Magnet Program at her high school. She also received an award from her Assistant Principle for her hard work and dedication in getting ready for Speak My Peace. As well, she received a Medal for her hard work and dedication this year as an officer for Spanish National Honor Society.



“OUR VOICES MATTER.”

COMMISSIONER JOSE "PEPE" DIAZ
YOUTH COMMISSIONERS ALEJANDRO MORENO AND PETER RAMON

ABOUT ALEJANDRO MORENO

Having moved to the United States from Venezuela at the age of four, Alejandro started his involvement with his community while in the first grade when he joined Cub Scout Pack 552. His elementary school years were defined by many community service roles which included being an altar server at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, and an active volunteer with the City of Doral's Parks and Recreation Department. After he crossed over to Troop 552 Alejandro paved the way as he led fellow Scouts in giving their time to the Ronald McDonald House, Camillus House, and Fair Havens Assisted Living Facility. Aside from Scouting Alejandro is one of the most involved students at Ronald W. Reagan/Doral Senior High School having been elected as Class President for all four years consecutively, he also served as Copy Editor for his school's yearbook and is a member of the National Honor Society. His unique interest in politics led him to help found the Miami-Dade Teenage Republicans in which he serves as the Chairman. His interests include swimming, hiking, camping, dancing, and debating. Most recently he has been named a Congressional Medal of Merit recipient, presented by Congressman David Rivera, and the Silver Knight nominee from Reagan/Doral in Social Sciences, and placed within the top 5% of his graduating class, *summa cum laude*.



ABOUT PETER RAMON



Peter Ramon was born on October 23, 1993 to Hispanic parents. He grew up in Homestead and was homeschooled through the early years of his life. He later attended public school when his family moved to West Kendall in Miami. After attending two public schools, he transferred to Belen Jesuit Prep. School. He recently graduated *summa cum laude* on May 30th, 2012 and will be attending the University of Florida in fall.

At the age of 17, Peter began his work for the Miami-Dade Youth Commission and is now the Vice-Chairman. Peter has also worked in several events for children with autism. Most notably he has been primary organizer for a basketball clinic for children with autism since eighth grade. Peter recently went to the Dominican Republic and worked in conjunction with his classmates to construct a bridge in Pescado Bobo. He has worked in homeless shelters and has tutored children in need.

On his free time, Peter enjoys fencing, making chain mail and writing computer programs. He has been fencing since he was ten years old and was captain of the fencing team at Belen. He was also recently awarded the Matteo Ricci award for computer science. He was the founder and president of the Belen Statistics Club, the vice-president of Belen's Athlete's for Charity, and an active member of National Honors Society, Key Club, and various other clubs.

"OUR VOICES MATTER."

COMMISSIONER ESTEBAN BOVO, JR.
YOUTH COMMISSIONERS STEPHANIE GASTELU AND MICHAEL BERRIOS
CLERK OF COURTS DANIEL TIRADO

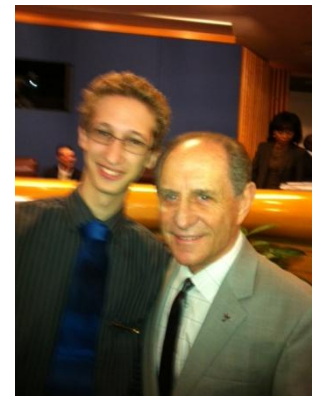
ABOUT STEPHANIE GASTELU

Stephanie Gastelu has accomplished many things the past year. Currently she is enlisted in the JROTC program for American Senior High School. Her current rank is a Captain, which is a great satisfaction. Also she has been awarded the certificate of Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A. She has many roles as a student. For example, she is an officer for her chorus; she take pictures of all the events they do. She is in the tennis team which is her favorite sport and she is even the leader for the female squad drill team. In the end she believes that the biggest accomplishment she has made as a student has been to become a youth commissioner for my district because she has the opportunity to express your thoughts on how to make Miami-Dade a better community for youth.



ABOUT DANIEL TIRADO

Daniel Tirado is an International Baccalaureate student at Miami Beach Senior High, and has been playing the cello approximately three years now. He has also taught and assisted conducting at his feeder school Feinberg-Fisher Elementary orchestra since his freshman year and has invested over six hundred hours into it. He has been a member of Cross-Country for approximately two years, and is now also open- water Scuba certified; as well as a member of Phi Beta Chi, Quill and Scroll, NHS, FBLA. He is the English Honor Society Secretary, Spanish honor society and Scuba Club Treasurer for his school's chapters. He was also involved in Speak your peace, an anti bullying and prevention workshop. But most importantly, he is a founding US Grant Committee Member. Grant Committee is a not for profit organization where an anonymous donor, donated \$50,000 during his freshman year and promised to donate \$20,000 every consecutive year. Her only stipulation was that it benefits the students of Miami Beach Senior High directly and that the students of the school be able to regulate and distribute these funds. Thus The Student Grant Committee was formed as a sub branch of the PTSA comprised of approximately 12 students chosen at random to ensure a diverse and impartial representation of the student body (and 1 PTSA liaison not chosen at random). He was elected by the founding members to become the founding president and he has been president since then. Together they've created their own bylaws, and have donated over \$50,000 to over 60 different groups, activities, competitions, and award ceremonies within the Miami Beach Senior High School and have \$10,000 dedicated to seed money for the upstart fundraising of school clubs which would not be possible without seed money. It's a Committee for students by students and is something he is really proud to have been a part of these past three years and looks forward to spending another great year with his fellow members.



“OUR VOICES MATTER.”

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE YOUTH COMMISSION

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY MAYOR MICHAEL IVORY

Michael Ivory is a sophomore at North Miami Senior High. As a student, Michael believes that the only one responsible for one's mistakes is him or herself. He also holds himself to a high standard as not only a student, but as an individual and viable member of his community. On a personal note, Michael enjoys art and listening to music. He believes the Arts to be perhaps one of the greatest creations man has known and will ever know, and that it is far beyond words and concrete description. He believes that art transcends a pretty picture or a sweet song, but that it can encompass words and life in general. He also enjoys video games because, aside from the fact that they are fun, he enjoys how they bring the entire realm of the Arts (sound and visuals) into a vastly engaging world fit for exploration.

As a Youth Commissioner, Michael enters the prestigious Group with high expectations and humble eagerness. He hopes to learn much, not only about the functioning of local government, but also about his community as a whole. He looks at his peers and classmates with full recognition of their potential and with hopes that through his work with the Commission, he will be able to help his fellow youth understand their potential as well. Recognizing that the youth are literally the future of society, he hopes to improve the prospects of society's future success. He is honored to be a member of the Commission, but also realizes that he is a servant to society, and hopes to leave the Commission having made a change for the better.



AGENDA COORDINATOR LILJUAN GONZALEZ

Liljuan Gonzalez is the Miami-Dade Youth Commissioner Agenda Coordinator, who is currently a junior at William H. Turner Technical Arts High School (Turner Tech). He is scheduled to graduate in 2013 and is an exceptional student and individual. Liljuan is not only focused, enthusiastic and intelligent, but he also an excellent leader. He is president of FPSA (Florida Public Service Association) and Turner Tech's National Honor Society. Academically, Liljuan is ranked in the top 1% of his junior class and juggles three academic programs of study: he is a dual enrollment student at Miami-Dade College, an AP/Honors student at Turner Tech, and a Criminal Justice student in the Public Service Academy. Liljuan has also completed more than 150 hours of community service doing various projects and has also obtained an entire year worth of college credits.

To continue, this young man is dedicated and goal oriented and these qualities are exhibited in his many extracurricular activities. He has a passion for law and helping out in his community and strives for success in whatever he does. For instance, he recently managed to obtain second place in the FEF Annual Brain Bowl Competition as team captain, after he and his teammates beat 33 out of 34 schools and endured over 14 hours of competition. He is an extraordinary young man that has a tremendous potential to achieve a lot in life and during his term as a Miami-Dade Youth Commissioner, he hopes to decrease violence among students and make sure that his fellow peers understand the importance of an education.



MDCPS BOARD LIAISON ANNETTE VALERO

School Board Liaison Annette Valero is very involved in her school as the English Honor Society President, Interact Vice-President, Thespians Secretary and Committee Leader, Science Honor Society Secretary and various other school clubs. A lot of her community service includes volunteering for Jungle Island, Ronald McDonald House, Baynanza, and several community walks. She was selected to represent Miami Senior High School in the Silver Knight Category of Drama, as well as being presented into the Miami Senior High School Hall of Fame. She has received many honors in her high school drama career as well as plenty of academic awards such as the Carmen C. Quintero Award and graduating Magna Cum Laude.



“OUR VOICES MATTER.”

LETTER FROM THE JUVENILE SERVICES DEPARTMENT LIAISON

JEANNETTE GARCIA

It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve as staff to the Miami-Dade Youth Commission these past two years. When plans were underway to create a Youth Commission that would bring the voice of Miami-Dade County's youth to County Hall, our Department, Miami-Dade Juvenile Services, was a logical choice to carry forth this mission. I am very grateful to have been selected to be a part of this initiative as I have learned so much from working with these youth who are a true reflection of Miami-Dade County's population and our promise for tomorrow.

During the past two years, these young people have accomplished great things individually and as a Commission. With each year that passes the Youth Commission develops and becomes better and more cohesive. I will miss the graduating Youth Commissioners, but I look forward to another productive year with next year's Youth Commissioners as their voices really do matter!

*-Jeannette Garcia
Special Projects Coordinator, JSD*



This newsletter has been brought to you by District 9 Youth Commissioner Ambar Mesa and District 10 Youth Commissioner Brenda Abreu Molnar.

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